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ABSTRACT

Research studies have pointed to a similarity between reading and listening that may imply that listening to writing is likely to be a useful means of evaluating it. Therefore a study was designed to determine the extent to which holistic scores assigned to student essays by readers correlate with holistic scores assigned to the same essays by listeners. Essays were selected from those written by freshmen at the University of Southern California. At the listening session, each listener was presented with a copy of the essay question and with a rubric used during the original grading system. Once the socialization process associated with holistic scoring was established, each participant was asked to listen to a few essays that had been tape recorded and to evaluate the essays according to the identical criteria used when evaluating by reading. The correlation between listening and reading was discovered to be .764, although the listening scores were at least a point higher in all but five cases. Analysis of the data suggests that some facets of written discourse--in particular, content, structure, and task fulfillment--can be evaluated reliably by listening. Surface areas of discourse such as spelling, mechanics, usage, and diction are more difficult to detect by listening than by reading. (Author/HOD)

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LISTENING TO WRITING: IMPLICATIONS FOR EVALUATION AND PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

Although the practices of reading aloud and listening as methods of evaluating written prose have long been associated with the composing process, little is known about whether or not a piece of written discourse can actually be evaluated reliably when it is heard, rather than read. To examine this untested notion, this study was designed to determine the extent to which holistic scores assigned to student essays by readers correlate with holistic scores assigned to the same essays by listeners. The correlation was discovered to be .764, although the listening scores were at least a point higher in all but five cases. Analysis of the data suggests that some facets of written discourse, in particular, content, structure and task fulfillment, can be evaluated reliably by listening. Surface areas of discourse, in particular, spelling, mechanics, usage and diction, are more difficult to detect by listening than by reading.

The practices of reading aloud and listening have long been associated with the composing process. It is generally known that many professional writers read their drafts aloud, either to themselves or, perhaps, according to legend, to discerning colleagues clustered in shared alienation in french cafes. Teachers of writing frequently read examples of good and bad prose aloud to their students; in writing classrooms across the country, students are often required to read their written drafts aloud to groups of student evaluators and then to revise their papers according to group recommendations. It is an untested truism of discourse that reading aloud a written draft will enable a listener to evaluate it in some way.

However, although reading aloud and listening as a way of assessing written prose continues to be used informally, and although the practice is recommended by several discourse theorists (Bruner, 1966; Hirsch, 1977; Moffett, 1976), little is known about whether or not a piece of written discourse actually can be evaluated reliably when it is heard, rather than read. The following study, therefore, is designed to examine this untested notion -- that is, to determine the extent to which holistic scores assigned to student essays by readers correlate with holistic scores assigned to the same essays by listeners.

READABILITY AND LISTENABILITY

To assume that written prose can be evaluated by listening is to assume that a discourse which a reader perceives as comprehensible, coherent and structured appropriately toward the fulfillment of a specified semantic intention will be perceived as equally successful by a listener of that discourse--that is, that the readability of a discourse is approximately equivalent to its listenability. Hirsch (1977) maintains that this is indeed the case, claiming that "listenability and readability may be the same" (p. 94), in that both qualities adhere to the principle of "communicative efficiency," which can only occur when the reader's or listener's forward progress is not interrupted by thematic inconsistency, strains on short term memory, or insufficient contextualization. These constraints, Hirsch maintains, are the same for both reader and listener.

Hirsch's position is difficult to assess definitively in the absence of research in the area; however, the generally recognized differences between spoken and written discourse suggest that at least some differences must exist between a readable and a listenable text, even if one discounts Bernsteins distinction between "restricted" and "elaborated" (Bernstein, 1962) code, and even if both texts are sufficiently contextualized for a general audience. All of us who have attended professional meetings will, at one time or another, have attempted vainly to understand the point of an obscure paper being read aloud

word for word. It is generally acknowledged that a discourse style may be quite appropriate for the written mode, yet quite inappropriate for the oral. This is corroborated by a study by Day and Beach (1966), which indicates that "the relative effectiveness of the visual presentation increases with the increasing difficulty of the material" (p. 403).

Recently, however, it has been suggested that although listenability may not exactly equal readability, that a close association does exist between the two. A recent study by Perfetti and Lesgold (1977) maintains that "comprehension by listening and comprehension by reading are very similar at some sufficiently deep level of analysis" (p. 141) and concludes that the criteria by which a discourse is evaluated are the same for listeners as they are for readers; that is, that "people are generally sensitive to information structure, foregrounding and thematization, and to sentence and clause boundaries. They tend to remember the same sorts of things after listening to or reading a passage" (p. 166). This position is supported theoretically by Kintsch (1977), who states that cognitively "the comprehensive process is the same whether a person reads or listens to the text, after the initial perceptual analysis" (p. 33) and that meaning becomes imprinted in memory according to semantic content, irrespective of whether it was perceived by reading or by listening. According to Kintsch, "a sentence may be represented physically as an acoustic pattern, graphically as a string of letters, and conceptually in terms of its meaning" (p. 5).

Similarly, Sticht, in Auding and Reading (1974), points out that auding shares many of the same characteristics as reading

beginning with the prerequisites of attention and memory:

> Both require the acquisition of language -- of understanding the system for selecting and sequencing conventionalized signs. Furthermore, it is necessary that these signs be decoded and processed into conceptualizations. That is, auding and reading both imply the recognition and conversion of symbolization into meaningful cognitive content. In addition, both skills rely upon the ability to form discriminations between stimuli (either visual or auditory), and depend on the development of higher order strategies (e.g. chunking) for subsequent improvement. To state it concisely, auding and reading differ primarily in the manner in which the individual receives the stimulus words; they are similar in the sense that they are both receptive communication acts that require a central language and conceptualizing base.
>
> (Sticht, 1974, p. 70)

The similarity between reading and listening cited by Kintsch and Sticht and supported by the Perfetti and Lesgold study suggests a close correlation between readability and listenability and implies that listening to writing is likely to be a useful means of evaluating it. Therefore, to substantiate these speculations, an empirical study of the relationship between readability and listenability is clearly warranted.

PROCEDURE

Listening by Trained Holistic Graders

At the University of Southern California, an elaborate system of holistic scoring is used each semester in order to provide maximum objectivity in evaluating final essays written by three thousand Freshmen. Similar to the method described by

Charles Cooper in Evaluating Writing (1977), the procedure at U.S.C. involves the establishment of a grading rubric (which sets down criteria for scoring) and then the training of all teaching assistants in the program (about one hundred) until agreement in grading standards is attained. Once this agreement occurs, a process called "socialization," each essay is read independently by three trained readers selected at random and assigned three independent scores. After each reader records his grade, it is covered by black tape, so that subsequent readers are required to make independent judgments. After an essay has received three scores, the tapes are removed; then if gross disagreement in grading should occur, as, for example, if an essay being evaluated on a four-point scale should receive a disparate range of scores, such as a "1," a "3," and a "4," the essay is then re-read and rescored by a "chief" or experienced reader, who had been instrumental in establishing the grading criteria for the particular essay question. Each student essay, then, receives three independent grades, which are then totaled and converted to standard scores for the assignment of final grades.

From these essays, thirty-nine (originally forty, but one essay proved to be off the topic) were selected for this study, each containing three scores assigned by three independent trained readers. Each essay was assigned a number, from one to thirty-nine, and then read aloud into a tape recorder by two readers, one male,

one female. From the list of teaching assistants, all of whom had been trained in holistic scoring, three listeners were randomly selected for each essay. At the listening session, each listener was presented with a copy of the essay question and with a rubric used during the original grading session, both of which are reproduced below:

ESSAY QUESTION:

Write an essay relating an incident, either good or bad, that has happened to you or someone you know since you became a U.S.C. student. The purpose of this essay is to enlighten other students: to let them in on a good deal or to tell them how you handled a difficult situation. Assume your audience is other students and that your purpose is informative.

This essay will necessarily include a narrative portion, i.e., a chrnonological series of events. What you write should develop a point, either by letting the incident itself make the point you wish to convey or by drawing specific conclusions for your readers. Your tone can be humorous or serious, but keep in mind the purpose of the essay: to be helpful to other students at U.S.C.

GRADING RUBRIC:

There are two parts to this question, both of which should be addressed in the essay. First, the student is required to develop a narrative. Secondly, this narrative must ultimately develop a point which would be helpful to other students at U.S.C. Failure to deal with either one of these two parts of the question means that the essay must be put into the lower half of the grading scale, that is given two points or less.

A 4-point essay:

deals with both parts of the question;
develops a narrative with a point using narrative detail;
shows maturity (variety) in sentence structure;
has appropriate paragraphing;
shows clear control of diction;
is virtually free of grammatical errors;
and uses a tone appropriate to the situation and audience(the question does not require a formal tone).

A 3-point essay:

deals with both parts of the question;
develops a narrative with a point using illustrative detail;
has appropriate paragraphing;
may be weaker than a 4-point essay in one or two aspects, often in the control of detail or in diction.

A 2-point essay will exhibit one or more of the following problems:

failure to deal with both parts of the question;
failure to use adequate illustrative detail
perfunctory paragraphing;
inadequate development or lack of coherence;
sufficient density of mechanical errors to interfere with communication;
stylistic immaturity, excessive use of cliches, etc.

A 1-point essay will compound the problems of a 2-point essay.

Extremely good or bad writing may raise of lower a score by a point or so. Obvious foreign language interference (agreement, prepositions, etc.) should be treated as a mechanical difficulty, that is, should only result in downgrading if it significantly interferes with the reader's comprehension of the essay.

One may note here that the main distinction between upper and lower half scores, according to this rubric, was on content, structure, and task fulfillment.Only slight emphasis was placed

on surface areas of discourse, such as spelling and mechanics, which resulted in downgrading only when they interfered with communication.

Before each listening session, in order to replicate the training which occurs during the usual socialization process associated with holistic scoring, each listener, after reading the question and examining the rubric, was first given four sample essays to read, in order to test whether or not the listener was still socialized from previous grading sessions. The four training essays encompassed the full range of scores, from one to four, and each participant was asked to rank these essays one against the other according to the criteria delineated in the rubric. Once socialization was reestablished (usually very quickly), each participant was then asked to listen to a few essays (from two to four) and to evaluate the essays according to the identical criteria as wea used when evaluating by reading. It was thus assumed that the criteria for a four point essay, in particular, the fulfillment of the specified task (dealing with both parts of the question), the development of a purposeful, detailed narrative, and the ability to write in a mature, error-free style with an appropriate tone would be as easily perceived by a listener as by a reader. Conversely, it was assumed that the infelicities of style and structure which characterize an essay receiving a low score would also be detected by a listener.

Listening By An Expert Evaluator

After the study involving the thirty-nine essays was completed, a shorter version of the study was performed using a member of U.S.C.'s English Department faculty, who has had a great deal of experience in holistic scoring for the Educational Testing Service, who has been instrumental in adapting this method of evaluation for U.S.C.'s Writing Program, and whose judgment in essay evaluation is considered to be highly accurate. This shorter study was designed as a check against possible deviations in listening scores which might have occurred in the larger study.

Ten essays which had already been both read and listened to were selected for scoring by this expert evaluator. Seven of the essays had received listening scores which were exactly equal to the original reading scores; two of these seven were the original training essays (see essays marked A and B in Table #2). The other three essays, essays #2, #13, and #29, were regarded as problemmatic, in that their listening scores had been considerably higher than their original reading scores, in some instances, over two points higher. These problemmatic essays were chosen for evaluation by the expert in order to determine whether the higher listening scores were due to the inability of any listener to detect flaws in the essays which could only be detected by reading (spelling, mechanics, infelicities of style), or whether a trained evaluator would be able to detect these flaws, even if they were not so readily apparent to the general listener.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Listening by Trained Holistic Graders

Analysis of the data, reproduced below (see Table #1 and the plot in figure 1) revealed a strong correlation ($r = .764$) significant at the .01 level for the study involving the thirty-nine essays. These results suggest that those qualities of written discourse most emphasized in holistic scoring, in particular, matters of task fulfillment, content, and structure, can be discerned by listeners. Since the main distinction between the upper and lower half of the rubric was concerned primarily with the matter of fulfilling the requirements of the essay question (developing the narrative, including a point that would be helpful to other students), the high correlation in the scoring indicates that both readers and listeners were able to evaluate by these criteria.

However, the shared variance between the two sets of scores was only 57.2% ($r^2 = 57.2$) and there was a difference in means of almost a full point between the scores assigned by readers and those assigned by listeners ($\bar{X}_{readers} - \bar{X}_{listeners} = -.9487$; $\bar{X}_{readers} = 7.1026$, $\bar{X}_{listeners} = 8.0513$); the listening scores were higher in all but five cases, where the reading score was higher by only one point. This 42.8% of non-shared variance suggests that some facets of written discourse cannot easily be discerned by listeners, facets which apparently did have a significant negative influence on the evaluations performed by the readers. Grading

criteria such as spelling, punctuation, and mechanics, criteria which are difficult and/or impossible to determine by listening but which were also included in the rubric (sufficient density of mechanical errors to interfere with communication) seemed to have decreased the scores assigned by the readers, but had little effect on the scores assigned by the listeners.

Listening By An Expert Evaluator

The correlation between the reading scores and those assigned by the expert evaluator-listener was extremely high ($r = .979$; see table #2). It is possible that the correlation would have been even higher had it not been necessary to average the three reading scores in order to obtain a single reading score to correlate with the single listening score. This high correlation suggests that the expert evaluator was able to discern by listening not only when an essay did or did not fulfill the main requirements imposed by the rubric (task fulfillment, content, structure, stylistic maturity); he was also able to use listening to detect the less obvious infelicities of style, usage and mechanics, which had influenced the original readers but which had apparently not been noticed by the thirty nine listeners.

TABLE # 1

THIRTY NINE ESSAYS: READING SCORES AND LISTENING SCORES

ESSAY #	READING SCORES	TOTAL	LISTENING SCORES	TOTAL
1	3,2,3	8	3,2,2	7
2	2,2,3	7	4,4,3	11
3	3,3,3	9	3,4,3	10
4	1,2,1	4	2,2,2	6
5	3,3,3	9	2,3,3	8
6	3,4,4	11	3,4,4	11
7	3,3,3	9	3,4,4	11
8	2,2,3	7	3,3,3	9
9	2,3,3	8	3,3,3	9
10	3,3,2	8	3,3,2	8
11	3,3,3	9	3,3,3	9
12	2,3,2	7	3,4,3	10
13	1,1,1	3	3,2,3	8
14	2,1,2	5	2,1,2	5
15	3,2,3	8	3,2,3	8
16	2,2,2	6	3,2,3	8
17	2,2,2	6	2,2,3	7
18	2,2,1	5	2,2,2	6
19	4,3,3	10	4,3,3	10
20	4,4,3	11	4,4,3	11
21	2,1,2	5	2,2,2	6
22	3,3,3	9	3,3,3	9

TABLE # 1 (CONTINUED)

ESSAY #	READING SCORES	TOTAL	LISTENING SCORES	TOTAL
23	2,2,2	6	3,4,3	10
24	2,2,2	6	2,3,2	7
25	1,1,2	4	2,2,2	6
26	2,3,3	8	2,2,3	7
27	2,1,2	5	2,3,2	7
28	2,3,2	7	3,3,2	8
29	2,2,2	6	3,3,3	9
30	3,3,4	10	3,3,4	10
31	2,2,2	6	2,2,2	6
32	2,2,1	5	2,2,1	5
33	1,2,2	5	2,2,2	6
34	4,3,4	11	4,3,4	11
35	3,2,2	7	4,3,3	10
36	1,1,1	3	2,1,1	4
37	3,3,4	10	3,3,3	9
38	3,2,2	7	2,2,2	6
39	2,2,3	7	2,2,3	7

r=.764

TABLE # 2

LISTENING SCORES OF EXPERT EVALUATOR

ESSAY #	READER SCORES	LISTENER SCORES	EXPERT SCORES
A (training)	4,4,4	4,4,4	4
B (training)	1,1,1	1,1,1	1
2*	2,2,3	4,4,3	2
11	3,3,3	3,3,3	3
13*	1,1,1	3,2,2	1
14	2,1,2	2,1,1	1
22	3,3,3	3,3,3	3
29*	2,2,2	3,3,3	2
31	2,2,2	2,2,2	2
34	4,4,3	4,4,3	4

* denotes essays which received listener scores which were significantly higher than reader scores and which were chosen for evaluation by the expert for this reason.

r=.979

LISTENING SCORES VERSUS READING SCORES

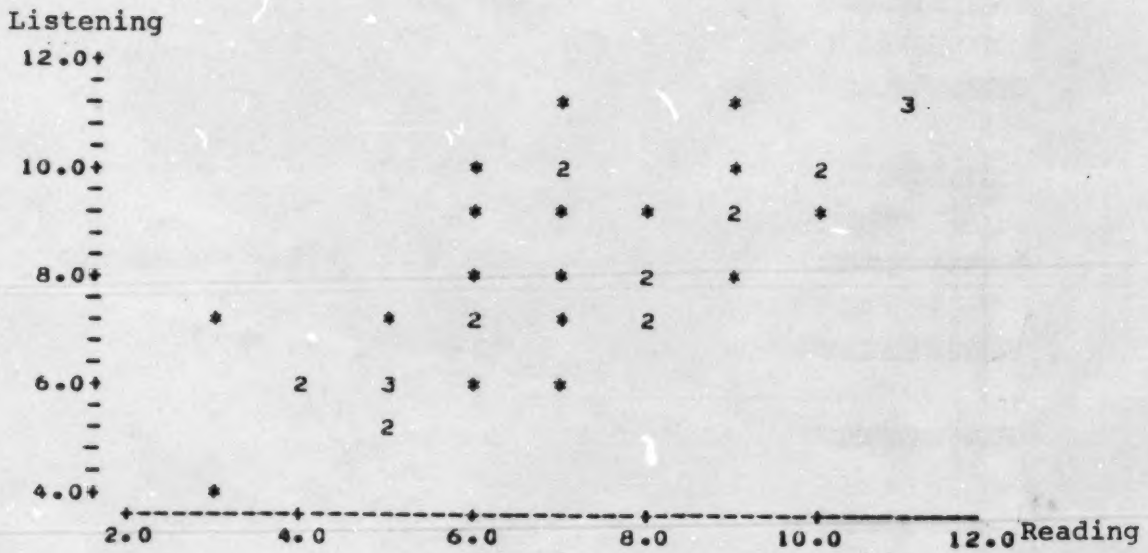

FIGURE #1

DISCUSSION

Listening Versus Reading

Analysis of those essays which had been assigned significantly higher listening scores than reading scores, in particular, essays 2,8,13,23,and 29, suggests that the higher listening scores may be attributed to three factors:

1) These essays contained errors of punctuation and mechanics which cannot be detected by a listener but which can be detected by a reader.

2) These essays contained stylistic errors which are possible for a listener to detect but which require more careful listening than the general listener is apt to do.

3) These essays utilized discourse conventions more appropriate to speech than to writing. They were thus perceived as more competent when they were heard rather than read.

Several essays assigned significantly higher listening scores than reading scores contained errors which were impossible to detect merely by listening. Essay #29, for example, scored 2,2,2 by readers and 3,3,3 by listeners, contained numerous spelling errors impossible to hear, a few of them, in fact, homonyms. "To" was substituted for "too," "mourning" for "morning"; "pitiful" was spelled "pityful," and "intelligent" was spelled with only one "l." Essays 13 and 23 contained several sentence

fragments, which, when following a main clause sentence, are equally impossible to detect by listening. In the following example from essay #13, for example, the fragment beginning with "because" seems to follow naturally from the previous sentence when read aloud:

> When my application for business school was approved, I thought that I can graduate within two or three semesters. Because I am a transfer student and the acceptance letter indicated that I was accepted as senior.

Similarly, in the following example from essay #23, the fragment beginning with "either" seems connected to its preceding main clause when read aloud:

> There was always a fun activity going on somewhere on campus. Either movies, sporting events, concerts, a guest speaker, always something.

Comma splices, contained in essays 8, 13, and 29 are also impossible to detect, as are improper paragraph indentations.

Several essays receiving significantly higher listening scores were characterized by errors which were difficult, but not impossible to discern by listening, in particular, dangling modifiers, and incorrect verb tense agreement. Essay #29, for instance, began with a dangling modifier:

> Sitting here, probing my brain and trying to pick one of the many bad experiences I have had at U.S.C., one image is singled out from the rest.

It is unlikely that a general listener would by able to detect this error, particularly since it occurs in the first sentence when one tends to concentrate more on task fulfillment and structure than on surface error; however, the expert evaluator not only noticed it, but mentioned it when his scores were being discussed. A general listener would also be unlikely to notice the substitution of "can" for "could," a tense error characteristic of ESL writers, contained in essay #13:

> When my application for business school was approved, I thought that I can graduate within two or three semesters.

What is likely to have had the greatest impact upon the higher listening scores, however, is that several of the problemmatic essays contained stylistic features more appropriate to speech than to writing, and were thus evaluated as more successful when they were heard rather than read. For example, essay #2, scored 2,2,3 by readers and 4,4,3 by listeners depended almost entirely on reflective monologue for the development of the narrative and contained almost no narrative or descriptive detail. Yet this essay sounded competent when it was read aloud, because of the suitability of this technique to spoken, rather than to written discourse:

> I was lost. No one was around to help me either. Finally, I came upon the "information" station. I thought, "This is great, now, maybe I'll get somewhere." Boy, did I jump to conclusions." (#2)

Similarly, essay #23, scored 2,2,2 by readers, 3,4,4 by listeners,

developed its narrative with extremely short sentences, which, when read aloud, suggest a conversational tone and seem to have been used to convey the feeling of panic:

> Then, suddenly, it ended. Everyone stopped having fun. It took me a few minutes to figure out what it could be. Then it hit me. I shuddered as I thought of what it meant. The end of the semester is coming up. That only means one thing, finals. (#23)

This essay, though, despite the seeming appropriateness of this section, was characterized by choppy sentences from beginning to end, and, on the whole, the incident was not developed with sufficient detail to justify the high scores assigned to it by the listeners. Its higher listening scores were probably due to the inability of the general listeners to detect that this was so, since this stylistic feature sounded quite appropriate in some instances.

The expert evaluator, however, was able to detect not only those errors in mechanics and usage which are difficult, but possible to discern by listening; he was also able to detect when a particular essay was faulty due to stylistic features more appropriate to spoken discourse than to written. Not diverted by the occasional suitability of some facets of the essays -- the seeming appropriateness of reflective monologue (essay #2) or the brief effectiveness of short sentences (essay #23) -- the expert was able to discern by listening that these essays were weak in narrative detail and thus did not fulfill the main requirements imposed by the rubric.

Implications for Evaluation

The fact that the holistic scores assigned by listeners correlated significantly with those assigned by readers suggests that judgments on content, structure, and task fulfillment can be made through the process of listening and validates the practice of reading aloud and listening as methods of evaluating written discourse. It also suggests that the scores assigned by the original readers were influenced only to some extent by surface characteristics such as spelling and mechanics, the limitation imposed by the rubric. This result constitutes a needed positive stroke for the unsavory reputation of English teachers, who are often maligned for their reputed overemphasis on superficial aspects of discourse.

This tendency to evaluate written prose primarily in terms of content and structure is supported by a recent study by Freedman (1979), which showed that the most significant influence on teacher response to student essays was the strength of the "content," and the "organization of that content," content being defined as the "development of and logical consistency between ideas," organization being defined in terms of "order, transitioning and paragraphing" (Freedman, 1977, p. 161). That content and organization constitute the most important qualities influencing reader response is also suggested by Harris (1977), who found a definite, although statistically insignificant tendency for

teachers to give the most weight to content and organization when assigning rankings to student papers.

The results of this study also suggest that while some facets of written discourse can easily be evaluated by listening, that other facets cannot, in particular, spelling, mechanics, usage and diction. What emerges from comparing the listener evaluations of the problemmatic essays with those of the expert evaluator is that only a highly skilled listener can detect the less obvious infelicities of style which can more easily be discerned by reading.

Implications for Pedagogy

The results of this study suggest that greater emphasis should be placed on reading aloud and listening in the teaching of composition, a position which has had several advocates but which has not been interpreted with sufficient seriousness. Moffett (1976), in particular, has stressed that "reading and writing can progress little further than the limits of their oral base. If a listener cannot understand something said to him, he will probably not comprehend it in a book. If he cannot say something to himself at least, he will not be able to write it" (Moffett, 1976, p. 31). Moffett asserts that "speaking and writing are so much alike in process that for learning purposes they should be considered alternative modes of composition, both translating thought into language" (p. 44). Hirsch(1977) states that the main advantage of reading aloud is that a

listener, unlike a reader, does not have a chance to "circle back and reprocess an earlier section of the text. Hence, the linearity of the prose can be rather adequately gauged by such a comprehension test" (p. 162). Similarly, Bruner (1966) proposes that "it may well be that to become aware of what one has written requires that one hear it, listen to it, compare the spoken with the written version. Perhaps the paraphernalia of the 'language laboratory' should be used, if only to have students read their compositions to a tape, and then suffer the tape to read back aloud what they have written (p. 111). According to Moffett, Hirsch, and Bruner, reading aloud and listening are important tools in the evaluation of written prose and should be given the pedagogical recognition they deserve.

Reading aloud and listening are particularly useful during the revision stage, one of the most important facets of the composition process, yet one to which few students devote sufficient effort. As all composition instructors know, merely urging students to revise often proves to be of little use, even if revisions are rewarded with higher grades. No matter how earnestly students may attempt to adhere to our injunctions, revising, for all writers, is a difficult task; moreover, simply to reread one's own writing often does not result in substantial improvement. Beginning writers, in particular, are often unable to detect when revision might be necessary or desirable, because they are unable to assume sufficient aesthetic distance from their own discourse. Imagining that their semantic

intention has been fully realized in their written draft, these students merely correct one or two misspelled words and sprinkle in a few missing commas. No real reformulation occurs (Clark, 1982).

Furthermore, the process of revision imposes an additional difficulty on disadvantaged students in that it requires an ability to read perceptively one's own prose, an ability which many students do not have. Skillful revising implies skillful reading, but many unskilled writers are often unskilled readers as well. To ask them to reread their own prose for the purpose of revising it is to place them once again at a disadvantage.

Constructive revising for such students can, however, be facilitated through the method of reading aloud and listeningg, which can take place either in the classroom, during office conferences, in a Writing Lab, or through the use of tape recorders. Reading aloud and listening provide the benefit of immediate audience feedback, which can help students realize that what they intended to say may not actually be written in their early drafts.

Moreover, many disadvantaged or beginning students will actually be more comfortable and/or successful when they listen rather than read for the purpose of revision, because many of them are far better listeners than they are readers. Sticht, in Auding and Reading (1974), points out that "at the college and adult level, the proportion of comparisons in which reading

clearly exceeds auding (A>R) is only .5, suggesting that some college students and adults never achieve superior efficiency in gathering information by looking at print in order to language" (p. 72). This is supported by an earlier study by Sticht (1972), which maintains that the poorer the reader, the greater the perference for listening rather than for reading, and by the Perfetti and Lesgold study, cited earlier, which indicates that poorer readers are more successful in recalling both normal and scrambled texts when they listen as opposed to when they read.

The results of this study, then, suggest that reading aloud and listening can be used as a reliable means of evaluating written prose, particularly for content, structure, and task fulfillment. Its possibilities for composition pedagogy have yet to be sufficiently utilized.

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